



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC

84 MAR 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MAJCOM SGs

FROM: HQ USAF/SGO
110 Luke Ave, Room 400
Bolling AFB, DC 20032-7050

SUBJECT: Release of Prescriptions to Patient Representatives

Since 1998 when two AFMOA policy letters were generated, the Air Force Medical Service has required a person picking up a prescription for another individual to present a signed statement from the patient permitting such, as well as either the patient's ID card or a copy thereof. This policy has not been in alignment with our sister services and has been a continuing source of contention with many of our beneficiaries. Due to the implementation in April 2003 of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) with its privacy provisions, the 1998 AFMOA policy letters are superceded by the new HIPAA standards. As such, starting immediately, an individual, acting as the patient's representative, can pick up a prescription for the patient under the following circumstances

- a. The patient has identified, either verbally or in writing, a family member, other relative, personal friend, or any other person authorized to pick up prescriptions OR
- b. If the patient is not present to give consent, the health care provider may use professional judgment to determine if it is in that patient's best interest to provide the prescriptions to his/her representative.

Likewise, HIPAA regulations also permit the conveyance of limited protected health information to the patient's representative. For instance, the pharmacist may explain to the representative that a medication should be taken on an empty stomach, but should not disclose that a medication is for the treatment of a particular condition.

In short, the policy requiring written consent and patient ID requirements for a person picking up a prescription for another is rescinded. HIPAA privacy requirements, as outlined above, should be implemented. Please ensure wide dissemination of this guidance at both the MAJCOM and MTF level. My POC for this issue is Lt Col David Bobb, AF/SGOS, DSN 754-4119, or e-mail: david.bobb@pentagon.af.mil.

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